

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
BOARD OF EDUCATION
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

MINUTES:
STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE STANDARDS OF QUALITY

November 4, 2002

Members of the Standing Committee on the Standards of Quality met on November 4, 2002, in Senate Room B of the General Assembly Building, Richmond, Virginia, with the following members present:

Dr. Gary L. Jones, chair
Mrs. Susan L. Genovese
Mr. Scott Goodman
Mr. Thomas M. Jackson, Jr.

Mr. Mark C. Christie and Dr. Jo Lynne DeMary were also present.

Dr. Jones presided and called the committee meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. At the opening of the meeting Dr. Jones, chairman of the committee, commented that the committee anticipates reviewing proposed revisions to the Standards of Quality (SOQ) in January and February of 2003 and having an agenda item ready for first review for the entire board during its March meeting and final review during the April meeting.

A presentation addressing closing the achievement gap was presented to the committee. The presentation included information on the current prevention, intervention, and remediation programs required by the SOQ, the four major sources of funding for these programs, and the public comments regarding this issue that were received during the board's public hearings. The presentation also provided information from research reviewed including suggested methods for closing the achievement gap such as teaching to multiple learning channels, creating a learning environment that is inclusive, adopting a success model for students, and encouraging parents to be more involve. Other suggestions from the research reviewed included improving the instructional quality and increasing the number of high quality teachers, reducing the disparity in resources and materials among schools, elevating standards across academic and technological areas, and creating programs that empower students. It was proposed to the committee that the Board of Education when revising the SOQ consider combining funding streams for remediation and prevention into one block grant in order to allow school divisions the flexibility to approach this issue based on the individual needs of the students served in each division. School divisions would have the flexibility to choose to spend the funds on programs and strategies that best meet the needs of their students.

The second presentation made to the committee was on the issue of resource teachers for art, music, and physical education instruction. The presentation noted that currently the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) require school divisions to provide instruction in art, music, and physical education, yet the resource teacher positions are not included in the SOQ as specified staffing requirements. The presentation also included portions of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission's (JLARC) report that addressed resource teachers. JLARC's report noted that of the 132 school divisions 129 employ resource teachers for music and physical education and 116

school divisions employ resource teachers in art. JLARC also indicated that school divisions provide an average of 8.08 elementary resource teachers per 1,000 students. The presentation then made reference to the public comments received in support of additional funding for resource teachers above the SOQ required staffing. The presentation provided the results of research indicating the positive and important effects that art, music, and physical education programs have on students. It was proposed to the committee that the Board of Education when revising the SOQ consider creating a staffing ratio for school divisions for elementary art, music, and physical education and health resource teachers. Further, that the board consider a range of three to six full-time equivalent elementary school resource teacher positions per 1,000 students in average daily membership in the elementary grades.

The third presentation made to the committee was on the issue of adult education and family literacy. The presentation included the current SOQ provision and the Code of Virginia requirements for adult education. The presentation noted that a task force was appointed in 2000 to study the issues of adult education. The task force submitted a report in 2001 and by September 2002 the Board of Education and the Department of Education implemented a number of the recommendations issued by the task force. During the board's public hearings on revising the SOQ, the board received numerous comments in support of adult education and literacy programs and requests that the SOQ revisions increase funding for these programs. Research reviewed in the presentation indicated that there are approximately 900,000 adults that do not have a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) Certificate out of a population of seven million in Virginia. Adult education is funded with federal, state, and local funds but there has been no increase in state funding for adult education programs since the late 1980s. The presentation noted that adult education contributes to raising standards for public education by implementing family literacy programs that serve the educational needs of both parents and children. It was proposed to the committee that the Board of Education when revising the SOQ consider amending the Code of Virginia to strengthen the language requiring adult education and family literacy and to require annual review of school division adult education programs to ensure program quality.

The final presentation to committee addressed the issue of administrative and support staffing. The presentation included information on the current authority for support staff contained in the SOQ, the SOQ funding categories that include instructional costs and support costs, and the support cost components of the SOQ as funded on the basis of prevailing costs. Support services are currently funded through Basic Aid based on the prevailing statewide costs. The prevailing cost methodology is intended to determine "reasonable" funding levels for support functions, not funding for the actual costs of each division. To calculate support costs, the SOQ funding model uses actual expenditure data from the Annual School Report (ASR) to determine weighted averages of costs. Prevailing costs are based on a linear weighted average calculation that approximates what most school divisions spend on support costs.

After the conclusion of the four presentations the committee reviewed the status of the Board's Annual Report and the Six-Year Plan. Dr. Jones, chairman of the committee, commented that the Board's Six Year Plan should include goals, objectives, and targets.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.